

—perhaps for two or three hours. How could an attentive observer or reflector believe it longer? How long would it be that a keenly self-inspecting mind could detect no schism, none at all, between its convictions and inclinations? And as to others, is it not flagrantly evident that very many persons, with a most absolute conviction, by their own ingenuous avowal, that one certain course of action is virtue and happiness, and another, vice and misery, do yet habitually choose the latter? It is not improbable that several millions of human beings are at this very hour thus acting in violation of the laws of rectitude, while those laws are acknowledged by them, not only as impositions of moral authority, but as vital principles of their own true self-interest." And do not even the best men confess a fierce discord between the tendencies of their imperfectly renovated nature, and the dictates of that truth which they revere? They say with St. Paul, f "That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do; to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not; the good that I would, that I do not, and the evil which I would not, that I do." The serious self-observer recollects instances, (what a singularity of happiness if he cannot!) in which a temptation, exactly addressed to his passions or habits, has prevailed in spite of the sternest interdict of his judgment, pronounced at the very crisis. Perhaps the most awful sanctions by

\* The criminal himself has the clearest consciousness that he violates the dictates of his judgment. How trifling is the subtilty which affects to show that he does *not* violate them by alleging that every act of choice must be preceded by a determination of the judgment, and that therefore in choosing an evil, a man does at the time judge it to be on some account preferable, though he may know it to be wrong. It is not to be denied that the choice does imply such a conclusion of the judgment. But this conclusion is made according to a narrow and subordinate scale of estimating good and evil, while the mind is conscious that, judging according to a bigger scale, that is, the rightfully authoritative one, the opposite conclusion is true. It judges a thing better for immediate pleasure, which it knows to be worse for ultimate advantage. The criminal therefore may be correctly said to act *according* to his judgment, in choosing it for present pleasure. But since it is the great office of the judgment to decide what is wisest and best *on the whole*, the man may be said to act against his judgment, who acts in opposition to the conclusion which it forms on this greater sin,

t Romans vii, 15.